

THE U IN FLU—Are U Ready?

5 tips to get ready for the 2010-2011 influenza season

Nursing Homes

- **Make sure all residents have been offered influenza vaccine before the season.**

Standing orders are a great way to get this done.

- **Make sure all staff are offered the vaccine at no cost.**

Encourage them to take the vaccine for their own health, their household members' health and the health of their patients.

- **Review the outbreak toolkit for nursing homes so you know what you need to do if influenza strikes your facility**

Rapid response to influenza is necessary in chronically ill populations. The outbreak toolkit is found on the DIDE website. Outbreaks are reportable to the local health department **immediately**:

http://www.wvidep.org/Portals/31/PDFs/IDEP/influenza/influenza%20outbreak%20toolkit_nursing%20home_Oct%202010.pdf

What is influenza-like illness (ILI): Presence of fever $\geq 100^{\circ}\text{F}$ (37.8°C), oral or equivalent AND cough and/or sore throat (in the absence of a known cause other than influenza).

What is an outbreak of ILI: Two or more patients with influenza-like illness occurring within 72 hours should prompt testing for influenza. When influenza viruses are circulating, even one positive laboratory test for influenza in conjunction with other compatible illnesses on the unit indicates that an outbreak is occurring.

- **Secure standing orders for influenza testing and antiviral prophylaxis in the event you have an influenza outbreak at your facility.**

Don't delay evaluation of patients with influenza-like illness just because you are calling each person's physician to get orders. Similarly, once influenza infection is confirmed by laboratory results, don't delay starting patients on antiviral agents. Think ahead.

- **Know how you can get influenza test results quickly if you have an outbreak of influenza-like illness so you can start antiviral agents without delay**

Antiviral agents must be started quickly for maximum benefit. A delay in diagnosis means a delay in starting antiviral agents. The Office of Laboratory Services (304-558-3530) can test nasopharyngeal swabs for influenza free of charge during respiratory outbreaks, and results can be available within hours of arrival at the laboratory. However, in remote parts of the state, local laboratory resources may need to be utilized because of the difficulty in transporting specimens to South Charleston.